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BLACK CAUCUS HAILS PASSAGE OF ACR 21- HISTORIC UC ACADEMIC PARTNERSHIP WITH HISTORICALLY BLACK COLLEGES AND UNIVERSITIES (HBCUs)

Sacramento CA- A Resolution (ACR 21), which encourages partnerships between UCs and Historically Black Colleges and Universities (HBCUs), was presented on the Senate Floor Wednesday by Senator Mark Ridley-Thomas and passed the Senate by a vote of 28-3.

The measure, authored by Assemblymember Anthony Portantino and strongly supported by the California Legislative Black Caucus, strongly urges UC Regents to establish a student exchange program or other academic partnerships with institutions that are classified as Historically Black Colleges and Universities.

"These portals of education are responsible for more African Americans entering into the middle class than any other institution in America save home and hearth," said Senator Ridley-Thomas, Chairman of the Legislative Black Caucus.

HBCUs have produced more than one-half of all African American professionals in the United States, including 50 percent of the nation's African American teachers and 70 percent of African American dentists.

Since the passage of Proposition 209 in 1996, Black student enrollment at UC has steadily declined. Academic preparation efforts have failed to eradicate the problem. Whereas Californians enrolling in HBCUs is on the rise.

Discouraging reports reveal that only 96 African American were in the 2006-07 class at UCLA out of a class of 4,600 students. This resolution encourages a stronger and closer partnership with institutions that have a proven record of attracting and inspiring African American students to complete their college education.

HBCUs originated in the late 19th century for black students who were barred from most institutions of higher education. There are 105 institutions classified under the federal Higher Education act of 1964 as HBCUs.

Graduates of HUBCs such as Morehouse College for men -which confers more degrees on African American males than any other institution in the US -include Nobel Laureate Dr. Martin Luther King Jr., award-winning filmmaker Spike Lee and Olympic champion Edwin Moses.

Spelman College for Black women, ranked as one of the best undergraduate institutions in the U.S. has alumni that include author Alice Walker and Children's Defense Fund Founder Marian Wright Edelman.

UC currently participates in a variety of "student exchange" programs and/or partnership programs with other colleges, universities and countries. Very few of these ties are with Historically Black Colleges and Universities.

Supporters of ACR 21 include the University of California, AFSCME, California Black Chamber of Commerce, the Greenlining Institute, the California NAACP and the California Federation of Teachers.

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